

Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Town of Los Altos Hills

PLANNING COMMISSION

Approved 10/04/2007

THURSDAY, September 6, 2007, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road

1. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Carey, Commissioners Clow, Collins and Harpootlian
Absent: Commissioner Cottrell

Staff: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director; Brian Froelich, Associate Planner; Nicole Horvitz, Assistant Planner; Victoria Ortlund, Planning Secretary

2. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Nancy Couperus, Open Space Committee, announced and invited all present to attend an informational meeting to be held Wednesday, September 12 regarding Sudden Oak Death disease.

Commissioner Collins shared her recent experience at a workshop conducted by Mike Sanders, Emergency Services Coordinator for the Los Altos Hills County Fire District. The workshop was held at the El Monte Station and discussed personal emergency preparedness. She showed the audience the contents of an "emergency supplies bucket" given to workshop participants that was filled with items that could be vital in an emergency situation.

Commissioner Collins was presented with a vest embroidered with the Los Altos Hills logo and a bouquet of flowers from the Commission in appreciation of her work in the past year serving as Chairman.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 3.1 LANDS OF FOOTHILL COLLEGE; 12345 El Monte Road, File #151-07-CUP (APPLICANT: SPRINT); Conditional Use Permit renewal for an existing/previously approved wireless communications facility. The facility consists of ground cabinets and six panel antennas mounted to the parapet of the Foothill College Gymnasium. No new change is being proposed to the existing buildings, structures or use of the facilities. CEQA review: exempt per 15301 (a). (Staff-Brian Froelich)

Ex Parte Contacts Policy Disclosure: none.

Brian Froelich, Associate Planner, presented the staff report stating that the Sprint antennas for the Conditional Use Permit renewal were located on the gymnasium and locker room building. Approval for the six panel antennas was granted in 1996 and renewed in 2001. No change is proposed to the existing facility. An EMF study compliant with FCC standards and a 3 to 5 year Master Plan with a coverage map had been submitted. The existing conditions of approval recommend a 3 year renewal but a new State approved senate bill had changed the minimum time requirement for a renewal to 10 years. The two renewal applications for the Conditional Use Permits for Sprint and Nextel operate on different frequencies and provide different types of coverage.

Buzz Lynn, representative for the applicant, said the purpose of the application was for continued operation at the Foothill College location. The two separate renewal applications carried different services. The Nextel facility provided coverage for two-way walkie-talkie and voice communication and the Sprint facility provided primarily data transmission and voice communication.

OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Clow felt the antennas were unobtrusive and supported the renewal application.

Commissioners Harpootlian and Collins supported the renewal request.

MOTION SECONDED AND PASSED BY CONSENSUS: (Cottrell absent) Motion by Commissioner Clow and seconded by Commissioner Harpootlian to forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the Conditional Use Permit renewal for a period of 10 years.

- 3.2 LANDS OF FOOTHILL COLLEGE; 12345 El Monte Road, File #152-07-CUP (APPLICANT: NEXTEL); Conditional Use Permit renewal for an existing/previously approved wireless communications facility. The facility consists of ground cabinets and eight panel antennas mounted to the parapet of the Foothill College Gymnasium and adjacent Locker Room building. No new change is being proposed to the existing buildings, structures or use of the facilities. CEQA review: exempt per 15301 (a). (Staff-Brian Froelich)

Ex Parte Contacts Policy Disclosure: none.

Brian Froelich, Associate Planner, stated that Conditional Use Permit approval for eight antennas was granted in 1998. The EMF report and master plan also apply to this renewal with the coverage map slightly different than the Sprint coverage map.

Commissioner Harpootlian asked if the technology utilized by the antennas would become obsolete before the next CUP renewal in 10 years.

Buzz Lynn, representative for the applicant, anticipated that the characteristics of the site would remain the same and there were no plans to change the equipment.

OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING

MOTION SECONDED AND PASSED BY CONSENSUS: (Cottrell absent) Motion by Commissioner Clow and seconded by Commissioner Harpootlian to forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the Conditional Use Permit renewal for a period of 10 years.

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Development Area Policy Amendment

Nicole Horvitz, Assistant Planner, explained that at the July 26, 2007 City Council meeting, Council returned the Development Area Policy Amendment to the Planning Commission for further review. Council wanted the development credit for semi-permeable materials on driveways, fire truck turnarounds and required parking spaces to benefit more lots in Town rather than only constrained lots. According to the recent Community Survey, a majority of residents felt that 7,500 square feet of MDA was too restrictive. A flat one-acre lot with an MDA of 15,000 square feet would have a percentage of allowable credit coverage of 34%, while a one acre lot with a 25 percent slope and MDA of 7,500 square feet would have a percentage of allowable coverage of 17 %. The amendment to the Development Area Policy could raise the coverage amount allowed by 2% to 4%.

Commissioner Harpootlian felt a closer look at the policy amendment was needed because of the greatly increased number of lots eligible for a development credit. He asked the origin of the percentages of credit assigned to the different types of semi-permeable surfaces.

Debbie Pedro, Planning Director, explained that the credits for materials were based on their permeability.

Commissioner Harpootlian stated that permeable concrete was very porous and wondered why it received a lesser credit than the other materials. He also felt that pavers installed with sand between them could significantly reduce water run-off.

Chairman Carey recalled that during a prior Planning Commission meeting, the appearance and permeability of the concrete was considered. Full credit for porosity was not assigned because the look of the concrete did not maintain the rural character of the Town.

Commissioner Collins said that the primary concern of the City Council in returning the Development Area Policy Amendment to the Planning Commission was that the coverage credit could be applied to all lots in Town and not limited to constrained lots. She felt the percentage of credit for permeable materials forwarded to Council had not been an issue.

Chairman Carey felt that the development credit could be applied to all lots in Town but with limited maximum lot coverage of 34%. Constrained lots could get significant benefit while maintaining the rural character of the Town by restricting lot coverage to that percentage.

Commissioner Collins requested clarification on the potential amount of development area credit allowed by this amendment to the Development Area Policy.

Debbie Pedro explained that the maximum credit that could be gained for the Development Area Policy amendment would be approximately 2,100 square feet for the use of permeable surfaces on required driveway, parking area and fire truck turnarounds.

Commissioner Collins and Harpootlian suggested more clarification in the wording of the amendment to the Development Area Policy to state that only required fire truck turnarounds, required parking spaces and the first 100 square feet of the required driveway are eligible for the credit.

Commissioner Harpootlian asked about the number of lots that would be affected by the amendment and with consideration to the changes in the look and feel of the Town. He noted that the possibility existed for 2,000 lots to be granted an additional 1,000 square feet of development area credit which would add a potential 2 million square feet of development area Town wide. He viewed that amount to be a significant change.

Commissioner Collins agreed that the change was significant. As this is an amendment to an existing policy, no public hearing is required.

Debbie Pedro stated that at the City Council meeting where the Development Area Policy amendment was discussed, the City Attorney had explained that the change could be handled either as a policy amendment or as an Ordinance.

Commissioner Harpootlian was uncomfortable with the fact that more public input was not solicited and received from residents for an issue that had the ability to change the overall character of the Town.

Discussion ensued concerning the development area credit, percentages for lot coverage and the level of public noticing.

Chairman Carey said that aesthetically, 34% had been defined as a threshold for lot coverage. The main reasons to limit development on sloped lots were the issues of erosion and water runoff. When those issues are adequately addressed with permeable surfaces, there should be no reason aesthetically that a sloped lot shouldn't get 34% coverage as allowed on a flat lot.

MOTION SECONDED AND PASSED BY CONSENSUS: (Cottrell absent) Motion by Commissioner Harpootlian and seconded by Commissioner Clow to forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve proposed revisions for required driveway area, required parking area and required fire truck turnaround per maximum credit in Attachment 1 and a lot coverage cap at 34%; request that staff investigate the CEQA guidelines requirement and recommend to City Council to review the project at a Town wide noticed public hearing.

Commissioner Clow requested that staff develop practical informational materials to help applicants better understand the use of development credits in the form of an applicant's guidebook.

4.2 Water Meters for Landscape Use

Debbie Pedro reported that a letter with Planning Commission's motion regarding the installation of second water meters for landscape use had been submitted to the Purissima Hills Water District and was on their agenda for the September 12th PHWD Board meeting.

She continued by stating that California Water Service does not have a policy that prohibits a second water meter.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Planning Commissioner Training Sponsored by League of California Cities

Debbie Pedro invited the Planning Commissioners to attend the League of California Cities training on Thursday, October 25, 2007.

6. REPORT FROM THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

- 6.1 Planning Commission Representative for August 9th-Cancelled
- 6.2 Planning Commission Representative for August 23rd-Cancelled
- 6.3 Planning Commission Representative for September 13th-Commissioner Harpootlian
- 6.4 Planning Commission Representative for September 27th-Cancelled
- 6.5 Planning Commission Representative for October 11th- Commissioner Clow

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7.1 Approval of August 2, 2007 minutes

PASSED BY CONSENSUS: To approve the August 2, 2007 minutes as amended.

8. REPORT FROM FAST TRACK MEETING – AUGUST 7, AUGUST 21 AND AUGUST 28, 2007

- 8.1 LANDS OF BROUGHER, 26974 Fremont Road, File #81-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a 10,496 square foot new residence with an 875 square foot basement (maximum height: 30'). The proposal includes a new 1,008 square foot swimming pool and patio. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (a) & (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.

- 8.2 LANDS OF RUSS, 12374 Melody Lane, File #96-07-ZP-SD-GD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a 1,320 square foot addition (maximum height: 27'). CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (a). (Staff-Nicole Horvitz). Approved with Conditions.
- 8.3 LANDS OF RAFFETTO, 14380 Manuella Road, File #87-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a 1,070 square foot addition and major interior remodel (maximum height: 16'). CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (a). (Staff-Nicole Horvitz). Approved with Conditions.
- 9. REPORT FROM SITE DEVELOPMENT MEETING – AUGUST 7, AUGUST 14, AUGUST 21 AND SEPTEMBER 4, 2007
 - 9.1 LANDS OF SZEKELY, 13643 Wildcrest Drive; File #157-07-ZP; A request for a Site Development Permit for landscape screening plan. CEQA review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15304 (b). (Staff-Nicole Horvitz). Approved with Conditions.
 - 9.2 LANDS OF COLMAN, 14440 Manuella Road, File #105-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a 1,353 square foot single story addition. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.
 - 9.3 LANDS OF MASSEY AND CHANG, 27741 Via Cerro Gordo, File #75-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit to demolish the detached 694 square foot garage and construct a 693 square foot attached garage. The proposal also includes a new 1,190 square foot swimming pool and patio. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 (e) and 15303 (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.
 - 9.4 LANDS OF WADHWA, 12690 Dianne Drive, File #131-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a 1,994 square foot pool and patio. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.
 - 9.5 LANDS OF ASKARINAM, 26900 St. Francis Road, File #144-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Permit Modification to add a 1,964 square foot basement to the new residence that was approved on April 17, 2007. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.
 - 9.6 LANDS OF REDDY, 28100 Laura Court; File #97-07-ZP-SD-GD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a new 764 square foot swimming pool. CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (e). (Staff-Brian Froelich). Approved with Conditions.

- 9.7 LANDS OF THOMPSON, 11556 Hillpark Lane, File #69-07-ZP-SD; A request for a Site Development Permit for a new 769 square foot swimming pool. CEQA review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 (e). (Staff-Nicole Horvitz). Approved with Conditions.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Ortland
Planning Secretary

The minutes of the September 6, 2007 Regular Planning Commission meeting were approved as amended at the October 4, 2007 Regular Planning Commission meeting.